(ii) Inhibition of sprouting in tubers, bulbs and rhizomes.

(iii) Delay in ripening and ageing in fruits and vegetables.

(iv) Destruction of microbes responsible for food spoilage.

(v) Elimination of parasites and pathogens of public health importance in food.

Threat of National Security due to mining of mineral sands

1438. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any project is pending with Government to obtain permission for mining of mineral sands from the coastal areas of Kollam or from Alappuzha districts of Kerala State by any private or joint venture firms;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government see any threat on the national security to allow mining of minerals sands containing rare earths by private companies; and

(d) if so, Government reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Three applications received from the Government of Kerala for grant of mineral concessions for mineral sand in respect of M/s Kerala Rare Earths and Minerals Limited for three areas in villages Purakkad and Thrikunnapuzha, in Allapuzha district are pending with the Central Government.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Storage of radioactive wastes

1439. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that management and disposal of long-life radioactive wastes has been a technical and political problem world-over;

(b) whether it is also a fact that M/s. Reliance Industries Ltd. have released a comprehensive report to redress this issue; and

(c) if so, the details thereof especially those relating to short-term and viable long-term solution for waste storage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) The management and disposal of long life radioactive wastes have been an important issue this world over. Technological solutions do exist and several countries have taken steps in the direction.

(b) This Department is not aware of any such reports by M/s. Reliance Industries Ltd.

(c) Does not arise.

Private participation in Atomic Energy Production

1440. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the amended Atomic Energy Act waiting for the approval of the Parliament provides for private participation in nuclear energy production in the country;

(b) whether according to the amended provision, the Department of Atomic Energy and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited will be bound to provide technical support to the private power producer; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) The Atomic Energy Act , 1962, as amended in 1987, allows setting up of Nuclear Power Plants only by Government or Government companies in which not less than 51% equity is held by the Central Government. At present, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) and Bharatiya Nabhakiya Vidyut Nigam (BHAVINI) are the two Public Sector Companies in the field of Nuclear Power. Both these companies are owned 100% by Government of India.